



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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POLICY MEMORANDUM

WINDOWS

1. NEW CONSTRUCTION

- A. All windows shall comply with the current Uniform Building Code (UBC). The requirement in the 1988 UBC is:
- 1). Light: the equivalent of 10% of the floor area in exterior glass, with a 10 square foot minimum.
 - 2). Ventilation: the equivalent of 5% of the floor area in openable exterior openings, with a 5 square foot minimum.
 - 3). All bedrooms, sleeping rooms, or potential sleeping rooms, below the fourth story, must have an exterior door or an escape/rescue window as part of the above requirements. The door or window must have the sill or threshold within 44 inches of the floor and an openable area of 5.7 square feet (821 square inches) using an opening width no less than 20 inches and an opening height no less than 24 inches. (NOTE: These 2 minimums do not equal 5.7 sq. ft. If the width of the opening is only 20 inches, then the height must be over 41 inches. If the height of the opening is only 24 inches, then the width would be slightly over 34 inches wide.)

NOTE: THE OPENABLE AREA OF AN ESCAPE WINDOW (OR DOOR) IS THE OPENABLE AREA CREATED BY THE STANDARD METHOD OF OPERATION OF THE UNIT, THUS A DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOW WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED AN APPROVED ESCAPE WINDOW IF THE OPENABLE AREA IS ACHIEVED BY RAISING THE LOWER SASH VERTICALLY IN THE NORMAL MANNER. SO-CALLED EASILY REMOVABLE SASHES WILL NOT BE APPROVED EXCEPT IN VERY, VERY UNUSUAL EXISTING CONDITIONS RELATED PRIMARILY TO HISTORIC MASONRY STRUCTURES. ANY SUCH APPROVAL REQUEST MUST BE IN WRITING, APPROVED BY THE BUILDING OFFICIAL, FILED IN THE ADDRESS FILE, AND ATTACHED TO BOTH COPIES OF THE REVIEWED PLANS.

- 4). All new 1- and 2-family dwelling basements must also have an escape/rescue window whether finished or not. See additional handout for the requirements of areawells.

- 5). Additions to 1- and 2-family dwellings that include new basement areas are required to provide an escape window or door within the scope of the work for the addition permit. The escape window or door may be provided in the new addition basement or the existing basement at the owner's option. If a basement has two approved exits, an additional escape window or door will not be required. One of the exits may be through a garage if the exit from the garage to the exterior is a normal hinged swinging door.

2. EXISTING CONSTRUCTION

- A. **FULL WINDOW REPLACEMENT:** If the entire window is removed, the replacements must meet all the requirements of Item A, 1 thru 3 above, except that existing habitable space that has less than the required 10% light, but at least 8%, may continue to be nonconforming. In that case, replacement units must be as large as possible within the existing openings.
- B. **SASH REPLACEMENTS:** In existing habitable rooms, the individual sash(es) of an existing window may be replaced without regard to light, ventilation, or escape/rescue requirements. **THE WINDOW FRAME MUST REMAIN AND ONLY THE SASHES ARE REMOVED AND REPLACED.** Window track inserts that do not reduce the openable width more than 1 inch (total of both sides) are to be considered in this category. Any overall width reduction of more than 1 inch will be governed by the requirements in Item C below.
- C. **WINDOW INSERTS:** Window insert units or window track inserts that slip into the existing window frame, within normal tolerances, and without substantially reducing light and ventilation, may be installed in all windows except in sleeping rooms if they are non-conforming for the escape/rescue requirements or if the insert unit will create or aggravate such a non-conformity.

NOTE: A GENERAL BUILDING PERMIT IS REQUIRED FOR ALL SUCH WORK THAT EXCEEDS \$300.00 IN VALUE (VALUE IS THE LEGITIMATE COST OF BOTH MATERIALS AND LABOR, WHETHER PURCHASED, DONATED, BARTERED, ETC.). IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT ONE OR TWO WINDOWS MAY BE REPLACED OR REWORKED WITHOUT REQUIRING A GENERAL BUILDING PERMIT, BUT THAT WORK MUST BE DONE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE UNIFORM BUILDING CODE.